

that the executive committee have not made an over estimate of convict labor. It is quite equal to, if not greater than, the cost of similar labor out of that institution. The petitioners have nothing justly to complain of on that score.

It is in proof too, that the institution, although "sustained by the wealth and credit of the State," cannot effect its purchases on more favorable terms than any private individual of good credit. This, it will be recollected, is one of the causes of the alleged grievance; and is in itself unreasonable. Punctuality in the performance of contracts is the strongest inducement to favorable terms. If the vender be assured of punctual payment, what cares he whether the vendee be the State or a private citizen? Any merchant or manufacturer of good standing, will enter the market and make purchase on as good, perhaps better terms, than the directors can; because there is equal, perhaps greater, certainty of their performing their contracts strictly.

But suppose the alleged grievances really existed, how are they to be obviated? The Penitentiary cannot be abolished. It is a State institution, intended to benefit the State at large. Its establishment is dictated by a humane and enlightened policy. There must be some means of punishment for crime—some place to which the criminal may be banished from society, deprived of his personal liberty, and be subjected to a strict regimen, which leaves no control over himself, in order to atone for his offences, and reform his character. To apply the lash, or the halter, for every crime, would be either to degrade mankind or destroy our species—it would be to introduce an age of barbarism, and overturn all the improvements of civilization and humanity. To prevent crime and reform the criminal are the great objects of punishment; and it is believed a Penitentiary properly governed insures these objects with greater certainty than any other mode. By it he is removed from the world; no longer at liberty to pursue the bent of his own inclinations, with time and inducements to examine his true condition, it must produce a thorough reformation if his character be not inaccessible to reform. While thus confined it is a benefit to him, and but justice to the community, that he should labor for his subsistence. It is sufficient for society to be burdened with his crimes; let them be freed from the expenses of his punishment. Some species of employment must be devised, and if the reasons alledged be sufficient to ~~direct them from requiring~~ the same reasons would operate with equal force to prohibit the inmates of that institution from being employed in *any mechanical operation*. Sup